(e) by when it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRAN NAIDU): (a) to (e) Information is being obtained from the State Government and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Steps to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir

*220. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRO SHINDE:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether following successful elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, any special efforts have been/are being made to revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and to restore its lost glory as a tourist attaction; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI S. R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN): (a) and (b) With the improvement in the ground situation in the State of J & K, efforts have been initiated to revive tourism in the State. One of the major steps taken by the State Govt. in this direction is declaration of tourism as industry. The State Government also proposes to start Winter Sports at Gulmarg during the current year. The State Government is also considering a special package of incentives for the people associated with the Tourist trade which include interest subsidy on the loans taken by various damaged Units, re-construction of departmental and J & K Tourism Development Corporation assets, repairs of local tourism infrastructure and the launching of massive publicity campaign. Government of India have already announced writing off of outstanding loans and interests of all borrowers who have not been able to repay due to militancy and whose original borrowing is less than Rs. 50,000/-. Government of India have also decided to provide an amount of Rs. 2.40 crores for setting up of a Convention/ Conference Centre at Leh to give a further fillip to tourism in this area.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act for Maharashtra

1355. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Maharashtra Chief Minister had requested the Prime Minister in 1996 to make relaxations in the Forest and Environment Act, for implementation of development works in Adivasi areas of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes Sir, the letter was received from Chief Minister Maharashtra in July, 1996 highlighting the hardships being faced by the Adivasies due to enforcement of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and suggesting delegation of power to grant permission under the provision of this Act to the State Government upto an area of 5 ha.

(b) The proposal of Chief Minister Maharashtra was examined by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and the position is an follows:—

The relaxations in the guidelines issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as amended on 25th October, 1992 has already been provided. In respect of proposals for laying of transmission line, pipelines for drinking water supply and exploratory drilling for prospecting of oil which do not involve any felling of tress, simplified procedure has been prescribed in the guidelines. The condition of raising